

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 4 and 6-9 are currently pending. Claims 1, 3, and 5 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 4 and 6 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,305,182 to Chen (hereinafter “the ‘182 patent”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,524,104 to Iwata et al. (hereinafter “the ‘104 patent”); Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘182 and ‘104 patents, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,625,608 to Grewe et al. (hereinafter “the ‘608 patent”); Claims 3 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘182 and ‘608 patents; and Claims 4 and 6-9 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 1, 3, and 5 are rendered moot by the present cancellation of those claims. Moreover, Applicants note that Claim 2 was previously canceled in the Amendment filed on November 29, 2006.

By the present amendment, Claims 4 and 6 have been rewritten in independent form to include the limitations recited in canceled Claim 3. Accordingly, based on the indicated allowability of Claims 4 and 6, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for formal allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

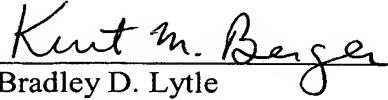
Respectfully submitted,

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